



MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY CHIEF

The last few months have been exciting ones for the Office of Ethics and Integrity (OEI). Our staff has been busy designing strategies to develop and implement a comprehensive ethics program that will reach all City employees in departments under the Mayor, and now the first of our efforts are being implemented. As you will read in this issue of *Words and Deeds: Ethics and Diversity News*, this includes the delivery of the Ethics Culture Survey, planned Executive Leadership Ethics Roundtable, and expanded Diversity Commitment offerings.

For additional information on OEI, or to share your comments or suggestions, please visit our website at www.sandiego.gov/oei.

—Jo Anne SawyerKnoll, Deputy Chief Ethics and Integrity

OEI LAUNCHES ETHICS CULTURE SURVEY

Survey is part of City's first-ever ethics audit

On September 5, employees across the City received an invitation to take the Ethics Culture Survey administered by the Ethics Resource Center (ERC), the oldest non-profit organization in the United States devoted to organizational ethics. OEI retained ERC to develop the voluntary and confidential survey in order to obtain an unbiased assessment of the City's current ethical climate.

In an announcement about the survey, Mayor Jerry Sanders encouraged employees to participate and declared their input vital. Because employees "are on the front lines of serving our citizens, I want their feedback so that they can help us put constructive solutions in place," said Sanders.

Employees with City e-mail addresses received an e-mail from ERC with a link that led to the online survey. Employees without City e-mail addresses received a pen and paper version of the survey through their payroll specialists. Those pen and paper surveys were returned directly to ERC in postage-paid envelopes.

Though the mandate of OEI is limited to employees in departments under the direction of the Mayor, several other departments participated in the survey, including City Clerk and Retirement Board, as well as many City Council offices. "A lot of us asked our own employees to participate as well because we think it's a great idea and would like to be involved," said Council President Scott Peters at a press conference announcing the survey.

Survey results will be available later this fall on the OEI website. The results will be part of a comprehensive ethics audit that will include a review of all City policies and procedures for consistency with ethics and integrity in the workplace, interviews with employees at all levels of the organization, and consultation with outside ethics experts on best practices in government.

Data from the audit will aid OEI in designing and focusing ethics training programs, and in the maintenance of a highly ethical culture among City of San Diego employees. OEI training will cover ethics-related local & state laws/regulations/policies & procedures. The training will also include a component to improve each employee's understanding of ethics with the purpose of strengthening his/her ethical problem-solving and decision-making skills.



ETHICS
RESOURCE
CENTER

Next Issue

Due to the Thanksgiving Holiday, the next issue of *Words and Deeds* will be published November 20, 2006



DIVERSITY PARTNERS ON “COPING WITH WAR” DIALOGUE SESSIONS

In late August, the Engineering and Capital Projects Department and The Diversity Commitment co-sponsored four “Coping with War” dialogue sessions to support City employees impacted by war going on many places in the world. Some employees have family members in harm’s way, living in places of war, or serving in the military. Other employees, while not directly impacted, are concerned about their co-workers who may be feeling stressed out, worried, scared, and/or distracted by war. These sessions offered all City employees a chance to share their feelings and concerns.

Management representatives were present at the sessions, as well as a facilitator from The Diversity Commitment. The sessions were structured with small-group sharing to discuss questions about fears, concerns, and how the war situations may be affecting employees while at work. Resources for additional help, including information about the City’s Employee Assistance Program and tips on dealing with stress from the National Mental Health Association, were also provided.



EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP ETHICS ROUNDTABLE SLATED FOR OCTOBER

OEI ethics training will begin with top management

Because leaders set the tone of the organization, OEI has planned an Executive Leadership Ethics Roundtable for the Mayor, Chief Operating Officer (COO), all Deputy Chiefs, Assistant COO, Fire-Rescue Chief, Police Chief, and Personnel Director. The roundtable is scheduled for late October.

The Executive Leadership Ethics Roundtable will begin a conversation about how the City of San Diego can strengthen and maintain a culture and practice of ethics. The session will also introduce critical issues and national patterns in local government ethics.

The day-long session will be facilitated by Judy Nadler, former Mayor of Santa Clara, California, who is now a Senior Fellow in Government Ethics at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics, and an adjunct faculty member of the department of political science at Santa Clara University.

“San Diego’s leadership is to be applauded for taking the opportunity to engage in meaningful dialog about strengthening and maintaining public trust through ethical decision-making,” said Nadler.

After the Executive Leadership Ethics Roundtable, OEI will implement training for unclassified managers within the City, followed by classified employees.

AUDIT AND COMPLIANCE SPECIALIST ADDRESSES GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTANTS

Danielle Knighten, MBA, OEI’s Ethics Audit and Compliance Specialist, recently returned from Atlanta, where she served as a panelist at the Association of Government Accountants’ National Internal Control & Fraud Conference. She was joined in the panel discussion, “Fraud Hotlines: A Useful Tool in Detecting Fraud,” by auditors and controllers from the cities of Tulsa, Mobile, and Atlanta.

At the conference, Knighten described San Diego’s experience with the Employee Hotline, a confidential means for City employees to report suspected cases of waste, fraud, abuse or other unethical conduct. The Auditor and Comptroller’s Office implemented the Employee Hotline in December 2005; administration of the hotline was transferred to OEI in January 2006 upon transition to the Strong Mayor form of government.

“This was a great opportunity to share our best practices and lessons learned during this first year of operation and to hear others’ experiences,” said Knighten. “As it turns out, none of us on panel have the same type of operation. We each have different policies and procedures for handling hotline calls.”

Holding a B.S. in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting as well as a Master of Business Administration, Knighten was instrumental in the implementation of, and continues to manage, the Employee Hotline.

Founded in 1950, the Association of Government Accountants supports government finance professionals working in federal, state and local governments as well as the private sector and academia.

The Office of Ethics and Integrity’s mission is to strengthen the City’s Ethical Climate so that HONOR is cherished, personal integrity, and ethical courage are the cultural norms and all employees are supported and encouraged to use their judgment and initiative in the conduct of ethical practices in the workplace.

Through these practices, our workplace will become more customer service oriented; our workforce motivated and satisfied; and public trust will be restored.